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Testimony on HB 5318
An Act Concerning Idling in Excess of Three Minutes By Certain Trucks And Buses

Dear Chairmen Albis and Sen. Kennedy and members of the committee. Thank you for raising hb 5318 for consideration this session. I am supportive of the bill and would like to ask that the committee consider adding a section that would address the concerns of refrigerated "reefer" trucks. As you may know, refrigerated trucks may need to have their engines running to provide electrical power to the refrigerators in their cargo areas. Forcing these trucks to shut down could damage cargo and be inadvisable to mandate.

However, in certain cases when electrical power is available from a local power grid, such as in the case of overnight parking or loading at a warehouse or distribution center, these trucks should be included in the 3 minute idling ban as they can get power directly from the grid. This is called electric standby capability. This would certainly be an environmental improvement over the current situation where diesel refrigerated trucks can be found idling long hours or even overnight at facilities that could provide power directly from the power grid to power the refrigerators. The bill should even go so far as to mandate that refrigerator trucks be equipped with a mechanism that would allow them to connect to a power grid so that they do not need to idle in order to power the refrigerators. California adopted laws in 2008 (TRU (Transport Refrigeration Unit) particulate rule, outlined in Article 8, section 2477 of CARB) that mandate all refrigerated trucks 7 years or older must be replaced unless they have electric standby capabilities. Most new refrigerated trucks sold today nationwide already come with electric standby capability and some are even moving into fuel cell and hybrid storage batteries to save fuel when not near a usable grid.

Not only is electric standby cleaner and more efficient than power from a diesel engine, according to Fleetpower.com, diesel truck fleets can see a reduction in fuel usage of more than 40%, which is a cost savings benefit to the company and a large reduction in particulate pollution.

Enforcement of this rule must also be a major component of this bill. From my personal experience, I have seen loading docks in my district where refrigerated trucks with electric standby capacity are still left idling for hours on end at loading docks. This practice must stop as it is a product of older bad habits and it persists despite the research and common sense that tells drivers that it is wasteful and environmentally harmful.

I thank you for taking the time to consider these points and I wish you good luck in deliberating this bill.

State Representative Rick Lopes 24th